



***Supporting Our Youth***

A Program of Sherbourne Health Centre



# **Supporting Our Youth:**

**a community-based approach to  
reducing risks and building  
resilience in lgbtt youth**



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**[www.soytoronto.org](http://www.soytoronto.org)**

# SOY'S

## NEWCOMER/IMMIGRANT YOUTH PROGRAM



A safe and supportive space where NEWCOMER and/or IMMIGRANT QUEER, TRANS, and QUESTIONING YOUTH find a place to gather, share ideas, questions, and most of all HAVE FUN!

The program includes a weekly drop-in. For dates and times call Suhail @ (416) 324 5080 or Send an e-mail to: [soynewcomer@sherbourne.on.ca](mailto:soynewcomer@sherbourne.on.ca)  
[www.soytoronto.org](http://www.soytoronto.org)



- **Forms of migration:**
  - **with family**
  - **on their own**
    - » **Newcomers: some were refugees, students, visitors, undocumented**
    - » **Within Canada: students, visitors, purposeful**

# **Migrant Newcomer Youth**

- **Newcomers came on their own to:**
  - **flee war, political repression, violence and discrimination**
  - **escape homophobia in families, religious institutions, communities**
  - **find LGBT communities**
  - **find work**
  - **acquire an education**
  - **“find freedom”**

# Migrant Newcomer Youth

**Seeking  
Freedom**

**Alvaro**



# Migrant Newcomer Youth

**Seeking  
Freedom**

**Yutta**





# Challenges Newcomer Youth Face

- **Poverty**

- no income & no employment (Toronto expensive)
- inadequate social assistance
- education and credentials not recognized
- being youth

- **Racism**

- LGBT youth experience racism or 'exoticization' in gay community
- LGBT youth internalize feelings of inferiority
- Border problems – after 9/11

## ***RACISM***

**“[In the gay village] the hierarchy is very clear between people of different ethnicities... they are perceived in the lower levels of that hierarchy, they’re not accepted, not popular. They can’t really fit in and participate in the everyday social activities of Church Street like others because they’re not accepted or they’re not perceived as cool enough or good enough for the image that Church Street needs to maintain.”**

# Challenges Newcomer Youth Face

- **Limited access to services**
- **Limited access to community**
  - **ethno-specific LGBT groups not youth-oriented**
  - **exploitation**
- **Language barriers**

# Challenges Newcomer Youth Face

## *Language Barrier*

- “In the beginning, it was hell, to tell you the truth. It was really hard. In my language, I’m fluent. When I had to learn this language and I found myself being unable to express anything, it was quite hard... Looking for someone to be with was really hard. I couldn’t find anyone because I couldn’t speak the language... Church Street...I used to go to the coffee places and walk around to try to have some sort of connection with my gay life and try to find out what that was about, and to maybe meet someone which didn’t happen... I went to a youth group but it didn’t turn out very well either... They seemed to have an issue with my language problem. Some people found it funny and I didn’t like it... I hated this language so much. I hated it.”

# Challenges Newcomer Youth Face

- **Avoidance of cultural communities**
  - leading to double life
  - feel unwelcome/anti-gay sentiments
  - some youth visit relatives when they're hungry
  - relatives helpful until they find out they're gay



# EXPRESS - *Newcomer/Immigrant Youth Program*



- **Started in March 2002 with 30-week Grant from the United Way**
- **Weekly Drop in 10-14 youth / average**
- **30+ different countries**
- **14+ different languages**
- **90% refugees / refugee claimants**
- **Average age 19-24**

**Out  
and  
Proud**





# **EXPRESS - *Newcomer/Immigrant Youth Program***



**Building Friendships**

# **EXPRESS - *Newcomer/Immigrant Youth Program***



**Building Community**

# Migrant Newcomer Youth

**Finding  
Support**

**Yutta**






# Migrant Newcomer Youth

## Finding Support

Alvaro



[Read My Story](#) [How can YOU help me?](#) [Contact Info](#) [Related Links](#) [Donations](#)

### Updates:

**Friday, March 9, 2007**  
Today, we received a letter from immigration informing me that i was granted another deferral to my deportation. the new date is August 9, 2007.

**Friday, February 9, 2007**  
I am pleased to inform you that the Department of Justice has consented to a 2 month deferral of Alvaro's removal.

This will allow us to submit additional medical and psychiatric evidence as well as perfect the Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds application, and the 2nd Pre Removal Risk Assessment.

Big thanks to Hilary Evans Cameron, for your work at the court.

El-Farouk Khaki  
Barrister and Solicitor  
Friday, February 9

### ALVARO in the Press...

Download the Press release: [PDF](#) | [Word](#)

[The Globe and Mail - Feb 7](#)

[The Toronto Star - Feb 8](#)

[CTV - Feb 8](#)

[The Advocate - Feb 8](#)

[CBC NEWS - Feb 8](#)

[City News - Feb 8](#)

[Logo Online - Feb 8](#)

[NoticiasGLBT \(Amnesty International\) - Spanish](#)

[El Nuevo Diario - Spanish](#)

[Blabbeando](#)

[The Globe and Mail - Feb 10](#)

[The Ottawa Citizen](#)

[...more online coverage](#)

### IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Despite the 2 month deferral, supporters should keep contacting Minister Diane Finley's office to keep the